

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-5, 9, 12 and 13 were pending in this application. Claims 1-4 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and each of the remaining claims has been amended to recite the subject matter of claim 1. For the reasons stated below, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Takata et al. and claims 5, 9, 12 and 13 were objected to, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has elected to cancel claims 1-4 and amend each of claim 5, 9, 12 and 13 to recite the subject matter of cancelled claim 1. Accordingly, each of the remaining claims should be in immediate condition for allowance.

For the record, this amendment is NOT an acquiescence to the propriety of the rejection of claims 1-4. On the contrary, Applicant submits that the position taken in the Office Action in rejecting the present invention (defined in the claims filed on March 24, 2004) as being anticipated by Takata et al. (USP 5,977,613) is entirely unsupported. This prior art document fails to disclose or even to suggest many of the features of the present invention.

On the other hand, Applicant no longer wishes to prolong the prosecution of this case, and for this reason, has elected to submit the instant amendment.

In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is

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desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.


SHAW PITTMAN LLP
1650 Tysons Boulevard
McLean, VA 22102
Tel: 703/770-7900

Respectfully submitted,

MASAHIDE MAEDA

Date: December 15, 2004

By:


Michael D. Bednarek
Registration No. 32,329

Attachments:

MDB/LDE/dkp

Customer No. 28970